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# Comparative Resistance in Iberia: the Turdetanians and the Lusitanians

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As the Roman Empire spread through Western Europe at the end of the third century B.C.E., each new province presented a panoply of indigenous peoples. Naturally, such diverse groups of people had diverse responses to Roman rule. In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, there were possibly hundreds of pre-Roman tribes, and two in particular are the focus of this study: the Turdetanians and the Lusitanians. This paper evaluates the sources we have about each tribe, what we know about them before Roman presence in Iberia, how they each reacted to Roman hegemony, and finally why the Turdetanians and the Lusitanians reacted differently. I will show that a number of factors contributed to Lusitanian and Turdetanian responses to Roman rule, including cultural history, geographic situation, and economic motivation.

#### PROBLEMS OF STUDY

The foremost challenge of this study is the scarcity of primary sources. No written or oral histories from the pre-Roman Iberian Peninsula survive. The Greco-Roman tradition is our only source of literary evidence, but these historians can only offer the Greek and Roman perceptions of foreign cultures. For the purposes of this investigation, Strabo's *Geography* proved an invaluable resource. Strabo, a Roman citizen of Greek descent dealing in philosophy, geography and history, was a proponent of Roman imperialism writing at the beginning of the first century C.E.<sup>1</sup> His *Geography* profiled the history of peoples and places around the known world during his era, offering useful information found from his own travels, although he never traveled west of Italy. He supplemented his own information by citing earlier Greek sources like Herodotus (a fifth century B.C.E. historian), Posidonius (a first and second century B.C.E. astronomer, geographer and historian) and Eratosthenes (a third century B.C.E. geographer, mathematician, and astronomer).

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<sup>1</sup> Blaise Nagy, "Strabo," *Perseus Encyclopedia* (n.d.), accessed 23 October 2012.

In addition, Livy, a contemporary of Strabo, presents valuable insight into the earliest Roman activity on the peninsula in his *History of Rome*. Livy is especially useful in determining times of conflict in Hispania, because he describes when and why the senate sent additional legions to Hispania. Appian, a second century Roman historian of Greek descent, included in his *Roman History* a detailed account of the wars in Hispania with an ethnographic twist; he both recounts military action and points to customs and cultural values to describe indigenous Iberian resistance efforts. Lastly, the second century C.E. Roman consul and historian Cassius Dio's *Roman History* reports Roman military and political activity in Hispania and even includes a detailed description of a Lusitanian leader Viriathus.

Often, the abovementioned authors use the collective term "Iberian" to describe pre-Roman customs and traditions, further impeding the investigation of distinct tribes. That Greek and Roman authors even explicitly mention the Turdetanians and Lusitanians is significant: it suggests that even the ethnocentric Romans were able to see a distinction between these groups and other Iberian peoples. Usually the Romans did not bother to distinguish between different Iberians, as Strabo complains (*Geography* III.3): "I shrink from giving too many of the names, shunning the unpleasant task of writing them down." García Fernández argues that geographers and historians in antiquity created reductionist and homogenizing geo-ethnographic schemes in order to facilitate Roman administration and organization in conquered territories, but that at the same time these schemes may reflect some of the populations' actual redefinitions of identity that occurred during their integration into the Roman provincial system.<sup>2</sup>

García Fernández also points out that ancient historiographers and geographers are limited by the ethnocentricity of their field, offering a highly biased view of real events.

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<sup>2</sup> Francisco José García Fernández, "Etnología y etnias de la Turdetania en época prerromana," *Cuadernos de prehistoria y arqueología* 33 (2007): 125, accessed 22 September 2012. All texts translated from original Spanish by me.

However, “it is possible to extract information that is more or less true about substantial aspects of the pre-Roman populations of Hispania, like their level of sociopolitical development or the degree of urbanism that they were coming to reach, their relationships with other local or foreign communities, their economic orientation, resources, modes of communication, including some customs and cultural guidelines.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, even though antique Greco-Roman sources share a highly biased perspective of Iberian populations, they can be useful to examine some features, especially if evaluated critically.

Furthermore, although Greek and Roman authors do not have an objective view in their descriptions of indigenous Iberian culture, their depictions are still valuable to this study. The manner in which they describe Turdetanian and Lusitanian cultures is still indicative of Roman ideas about each tribe, and useful in understanding Roman interaction with each tribe. Having addressed the risks of ancient sources, one is now prepared to carefully evaluate ancient observations about Turdetanian and Lusitanian culture.

#### WELCOME TO IBERIA: HISPANIA BEFORE THE ROMANS

Two peoples living in two separate regions are the focus of this paper; the first of which the Romans called the *Turdetani*. The Greco-Roman tradition recognized the Turdetanians as the cultural heirs to the Bronze Age kingdom of Tartessos (Strabo, *Geography* III, 2, 12-13). Herodotus describes the great wealth of the Tartessian king Arganthonios and the prosperous market of Tartessos, founded on its thriving metal trade (Herodotus, *Histories*, i.163; iv.152). Tartessos was the Greek name for the Guadalquivir River, but the term also refers to the trading city and to the general region of the Guadalquivir River valley in Andalusia at the mouth of the river. Archaeological evidence suggests that the urban center of Tartessos for purposes of trade

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<sup>3</sup> García Fernández, “Etnología y etnias,” 123.

and industry may have been at present-day Huelva, but the exact geographic location of the city is still uncertain.<sup>4</sup> Tartessos' wealth came from rich sources of copper, lead, gold, and silver in the Sierra Morena of Southern Iberia (with mining settlements dating from the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.E.) and from rich soils in the Guadalquivir valley. Tin was another major metal resource and, due to its role in making bronze, it was in high demand during the Bronze Age.<sup>5</sup> The Tartessians traded heavily with the Phoenicians, who founded their own port nearby at Gades (modern-day Cádiz). Phoenician material evidence in this region dates back to the eighth century B.C.E., although most scholars believe contact to have been started perhaps centuries earlier, with the eighth century constituting the peak of trade.<sup>6</sup> Greeks were also known to have traded with Tartessos; archaeologists have found Greek weapons and axes dating to the seventh century B.C.E. along the Atlantic coast of the Peninsula.<sup>7</sup> The Tartessians adapted what some scholars believe to be a combination of the Phoenician and Greek alphabets to their own language, and surviving inscriptions date between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C.E., making it the oldest paleohispanic writing system.<sup>8</sup>

Around 500 B.C.E. the Tartessians fought the Phoenicians at their trading town of Gades, so the Phoenicians called in the help of the Carthaginians. After the Carthaginians calmed the unrest in the region, they took control of both Gades and Tartessos (Livy *History*. XXIII, 26-27).<sup>9</sup> The term Tartessos falls out of favor amongst Greco-Roman authors around this time as well, replaced by the term Turdetania to refer to the same region (albeit more expanded), whose

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Arribas, *Ancient Peoples and Places: The Iberians* (1964) 49. Detailed description and analysis of the objects found are surveyed in Fernando González de Canales Cerisola, *Del Occidente Mítico Griego a Tarsis-Tarteso –Fuentes escritas y documentación arqueológica* (2004) and F. González de Canales, L. Serrano and J. Llombart, *El Emporio Fenicio-Precolonial de Huelva, ca. 900-770 a.C.* (2004).

<sup>5</sup> S. J. Keay *Roman Spain* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1988): 13.

<sup>6</sup> Arribas, *The Iberians*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Arribas, *The Iberians*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> José Antonio Correa, "Los semisilabarios ibéricos: algunas cuestiones," *ELEA* 4, (2004): 75-80.

<sup>9</sup> Scullard suggests, "southern Spain should not be regarded as a part of Carthaginian empire, still less as an *epikrateia* in the sense of a province, but rather as a sphere of influence or a protectorate...until the Barcids" (21).

people were known as *Turdetani* or *Turduli*.<sup>10</sup> The Romans also referred to the region as Baetica or Hispania Baetica (related to the Roman name for the Guadalquivir River, Baetis), and as a province it was considered part of Hispania Ulterior.

The pre-Roman Lusitanians lived in the region called Lusitania by the Romans that includes the southern part of present-day Portugal and the Extremadura Province of Spain, mostly in the Duero Valley. Strabo describes its pre-Roman borders: to the north and the west are Atlantic coast, to the south is the Tagus river, and mountains to the east (Strabo, *Geography*, III, 3, 3).<sup>11</sup> Trade with other people was not a major part of daily life, although Strabo describes their rivers as containing “very great quantities of gold dust” (Strabo, *Geography*, III, 3, 4). The region from the mountains to the Atlantic was fertile, but all sources (ancient and modern) claim that the Lusitanians opted for a more nomadic lifestyle. Strabo even suggests that they did not use money but instead utilized bartering or would cut off pieces of silver if need be (Strabo, *Geography*, III, 3, 7).

During the Punic wars, the Lusitanians (along with the Celtiberians, another major tribe from Iberia) fought on the Carthaginian side as mercenaries. There is little evidence of Turdetanian participation; while their towns almost certainly served as Carthaginian bases, no ancient sources suggest that they were hired as mercenaries. In fact, Arribas observes that the Turdetanians employed 10,000 Celtiberians in the year 195 B.C. for defense; regardless the

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Arribas, *The Iberians*, 46-47. Arribas asserts that the term Turdulians could be the result of an increased Celtic presence in the region, with the Turdetanians being the direct descendants of the Tartessians and the Turdulians being a more Celticized related tribe in the same region. Since this paper does not evaluate the ethnicity of the region but focuses on cultures, and because the only distinction between the Turdulians and Turdetanians is evidently ethnological in nature, the term Turdetanians will be used to describe all peoples who lived in what was formerly known as Tartessos. Strabo also mentions Tartessus in relation to the Turdetanians and the Turdulians *Geography*, III.2.11

<sup>11</sup> It is relevant to note that the Greeks had a slightly skewed orientation of the peninsula, so what Strabo calls “North” is better described as northwest.

Lusitanians devastated Turdetania that same year, plundering the wealthy region.<sup>12</sup> According to Strabo, the Lusitanians also were called Callaicans (Strabo, *Geography*, III.1), however the term Lusitanians (*Lusitani* in Latin) is more widely used by scholars both recent and ancient, thus Lusitanians will be the term used in this paper.

In summary, when the Romans arrived in modern day Andalusia, they encountered the Turdetanians, descendants of the wealthy Tartessians. The Turdetanians had a reputation for being “civilized” in the Greek and Roman opinions because of their cosmopolitan trading center at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, written laws and histories, system of currency and participation in trade throughout the Mediterranean, probably including trade with the Romans. When the Romans met the Lusitanians of modern day Portugal and Extremadura, they had very little information about Lusitanian society. The Lusitanians appeared to be far more barbaric in comparison, living a nomadic lifestyle without much previous interaction with non-Iberians. The Romans probably caught hearsay that the Lusitanians were wont to raid neighboring tribes, but had no previous contact with them to form a firsthand opinion. Since we now have a basic understanding of the Turdetanian and Lusitanian situations on the Iberian Peninsula before the Romans arrived, we can better understand the pre-formed notions that the Romans may have held when they began their conquest efforts. In addition, we have some foundational cultural information that will contribute to explanations of Turdetanian and Lusitanian reactions when the Romans arrive.

#### ROMANS ON THE SCENE: FRIENDS AND ENEMIES IN IBERIA

Roman interest in the Iberian Peninsula was piqued between the First and Second Punic Wars especially around the time of the Ebro Treaty in 226 B.C.E. Prior to this treaty Polybius

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<sup>12</sup> Arribas, *The Iberians*, 75.

claims that the Romans showed no interest in Iberia until witnessing the great wealth and imperial growth Hasdrubal had acquired because of his Spanish colony, so they “resolved to begin to occupy themselves with Spanish affairs” (Polybius, *Histories*, II.13). Harris suggests that the Roman senate planned to fight its conflict with Carthage in Spain in 218 B.C.E. as a strategy to gain a stronghold on the peninsula.<sup>13</sup> After Scipio Africanus’ victory at Ilipa (in the Guadalquivir valley) in 206 B.C.E., near the end of the Second Punic War, the Iberian Peninsula was under Roman control. The senate sent praetors to govern and annexation officially began (Appian, *Roman History*, 38). Scipio’s main efforts were concentrated in the Guadalquivir valley, which evidently was firmly under his control at the end of the war as he founded the first Roman town of Italica in Turdetania for his sick and wounded soldiers in the same year (Appian, *Roman History*, 38).

Scipio’s choice to build Italica in the heart of Turdetania suggests that the Turdetanians were very quickly under Roman control and the region was relatively calm – even at this early stage of the Roman conquest of the peninsula. Greek and Roman authors agree that the Turdetanians were by far the most civilized of the Iberian peoples, with Strabo going as far as to call them gentle, civil, and “the wisest of the Iberians.” Conversely, Strabo recognizes the Lusitania as the “greatest of the Iberian nations, and...the nation against which the Romans waged war for the longest times” (Strabo, *Geog.*, III. 1, and III.3).

When the Turdetanians are mentioned, they are generally considered to be the most civilized of all of the Iberian tribes. Their type of civilization would have been familiar to the Romans. They had over two hundred cities according to Strabo, mostly along the river to facilitate trade. Although this is most likely an exaggerated figure, it provides good evidence of

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<sup>13</sup> W. V. Harris, “Roman expansion in the west,” in *Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C.*, eds A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen and R. M. Ogilvie (Cambridge University Press, 1989): 121. Cambridge Histories Online, accessed 04 October 2012.



Turdetania's urban reputation. The Turdetanians continued to be "blessed by nature," as they continued to mine their rich resources of silver, tin, copper, iron and gold (Strabo, *Geography*, III.2); Strabo describes how in their cities their large smelting furnaces had elongated chimneys to keep the fumes off of the street (Strabo, *Geography*, III.3). Roman immigrants moved mostly to mining areas to make their own fortunes. The Turdetanians most profitably exported grain, wine, olive oil, wax, honey, salt, cloth, and fish (Strabo, *Geography*, III.3). Their poems, ancient history, and even their laws were written in verse and in their own alphabet. Archaeological evidence from cemeteries shows that the wealthy Turdetanians imported Greek pottery and clothing as early as the fifth century B.C.E., so even aspects of their quotidian life would not have been foreign to the Romans.<sup>14</sup> In looking at Turdetanian society, it is no surprise that the Romans saw something they would recognize as "civilized;" they too had writing, participated in trade and industry, and had organized laws and currency.

There is little evidence of significant resistance to Roman rule in Turdetania, and to Carthaginian rule before that.<sup>15</sup> In 197, the senate divided Hispania into Citerior and Ulterior, and sent some of the legionary part of the army back to Rome. Rebellion broke out south of the Guadalquivir and in the Punic coastal towns and quickly spread so the new praetors had to prolong their stay in Hispania to impose order (Livy, XXXII.21). It is not clear whether the Turdetanians themselves were responsible for this uprising or merely victims of raids by neighboring tribes. Regardless, legions were sent back to Hispania, order restored. Other examples of possible Turdetanian resistance are scarce. In fact, the next time the Romans went to

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<sup>14</sup> Arribas, *The Iberians*, 45.

<sup>15</sup> Koch suggests that the Carthaginians focused on exploiting the mines and socio-political Hellenistic development. He also highlights that the Carthaginians did not have an empire in the west, but rather hegemony until the era of the Barcids. Michael Koch, "Cartago e Hispania anteriores a los bárquidas," *Religión, lengua, y cultura prerromanas de Hispania*, eds Francisco Villar and María Pilar Fernández Álvarez (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad De Salamanca, 2001): 190-191.

Turdetania to impose order was 190, when the Lusitanians were plundering their southern neighbors (Livy, XXXII.25). After over a century of relative peace, Caesar granted the people of Gades citizenship after he dreamt he was quaestor there wherein he had intercourse with his mother – an omen he took to symbolize his future sole rulership of the place (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 41.24). Then in 14 B.C.E., Augustus gave to the senate the province of Baetica because it continued to be so secure, while he kept the rest of Hispania under his control. He claimed that the other regions either faced hostility on their borders from Iberian tribes or were capable of serious revolts themselves, and that he alone had enough arms and legions to maintain order (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 53.12). Bouchier cites the Turdetanians as “one of the numerous examples of a rich commercial people of ancient civilization unable to offer resistance to active invaders.”<sup>16</sup> Since the Romans attributed such a high level of “civility” to the Turdetanians, there is also reason to believe that the Romans would think them “wise” enough to accommodate Roman rule without “barbaric” resistance.

The Lusitanians did not share the gentle, civilized reputation of the Turdetanians. They first break into Roman histories in 193 B.C.E. at war with Rome, defeating the praetors of both Ulterior and Citerior at Toletum.<sup>17</sup> There were subsequent battles and raids in 190 B.C.E. and 188 B.C.E. In 187 the wars in Northern Italy and Gaul diminished, so the senate doubled the number of legions in Hispania. This seemed to hold off the Lusitanians for a while: in 184 the praetors of Hispania Calpurnius Piso and L. Quincticus Crispinus enjoyed a triumph upon their arrival home.<sup>18</sup> This was not the end of the Luso-Roman conflict in Spain, but was a period of relative calm between the groups until Lusitanian resistance rose again in the 160s and 150s. Harris attributes this calm to the senate, suggesting that the most recent governors had made

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<sup>16</sup> E S. Bouchier, *Spain Under the Roman Empire* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1914): 70.

<sup>17</sup> Harris “Roman Expansion,” 124.

<sup>18</sup> Harris “Roman Expansion,” 124.

enough attempts to gain more land and figured that little progress could be made until they were replaced.<sup>19</sup> In 152, Rome took the offensive and captured Oxturaci the largest city in Lusitania: Ser. Sulpicius Galba famously massacred thousands of Lusitanian men and sold thousands more Lusitanians into slavery.<sup>20</sup>

A major shift in the conflict came to the Lusitanians as Viriathus took the lead, who was able to form federations with nearby Celtiberian tribes. From 147-143 B.C.E. he began to lead a series of successful attacks in Turdetania, and was forced to withdraw only once to nearby Baecula (Bailén, just north of the Guadalquivir) in 144. Under the leadership of Viriathus, the Lusitanians continued to gain momentum, as he drew support from regions that the Romans had considered pacified.<sup>21</sup> In 141, Viriathus cornered the Roman commanders and demanded a treaty in which the Romans had to agree to leave Lusitania under Lusitanian control. The Romans agreed to the treaty, but Caepio Fabius Servilianus castigated five cities in Baeturia for collaborating with Viriathus shortly after. In 139, the brother of Servilianus arranged for Viriathus' assassination, bribing Viriathus' three most trusted friends to stab him in the throat (the only part of his body not protected by armor) while he slept (Appian, *Roman History*, 74). Without the leadership of Viriathus, Lusitanian resistance was essentially over. The Romans broke up cities and villages the year after his death, moving many Lusitanians to the plains (Strabo, *Geography*, III.3.5).<sup>22</sup>

No Greek sources on the Lusitanians remain, nor is there reference to any prior to Roman presence in Iberia; it is most likely that the Romans encountered them for the first time in war.

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<sup>19</sup> Harris "Roman Expansion," 122.

<sup>20</sup> On Oxturaci: "Thus he avenged treachery with treachery in a manner unworthy of a Roman, but imitating barbarians." Appian, *Roman History*, 60. This citation suggests that the Romans fought the violent resistance of the Lusitanians by imposing their own violent acts.

<sup>21</sup> Harris mentions support from the south of the Guadalquivir for later campaigns by the Lusitanians, but the Turdetani are never mentioned explicitly (*Roman Expansion*, 136).

<sup>22</sup> On settlement in the plains: Bouchier, *Spain*, 70.

Consequently, the accounts of the Lusitanians differ significantly from those of the Turdetanians. Strabo describes the Lusitanians as a mighty, “warlike” barbarian group: quick, nimble, and good at deploying troops. They were respected for their well-trained horses, but were still alien to the Romans with their long hair and their rambunctious hopping style of dance before battle. Though he describes their land as fertile and rich in metals, Strabo asserts that they preferred to engage in war and “spending their time in brigandage” (Strabo, *Geography*, III 3.5-7).

The leader Viriathus is well respected in Roman sources, said to have merited recognition due to his deeds despite coming from a simple pastoral background. He was both physically and intellectually admirable: Cassius Dio suggests that his lifestyle enabled him to be extremely adaptable, able to eat or drink whatever came his way and suffering little sensitivity to the cold weather. Dio praises Viriathus for his ability to plan quickly and to act at the proper time. He was well liked by his followers, seen to be neither overbearing nor overly humble due to his obscure background. Most significantly, he was a lover and master of war, motivated not by personal ambition but “for the sake of warlike deeds in themselves” (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 22.73).

It is relevant to mention that the veracity of Greco-Roman descriptions in this investigation is less important than what the Romans perceived to be cultural traits of the Lusitanians and Turdetanians. It is certain that the Lusitanians were far more resistant to Roman rule, and after they were finally subjugated, they received different treatment from Rome. The only Roman contact with Lusitanians until this point was in conflict, so it is understandable that Strabo, Appian, Livy, and Cassius Dio’s depictions would reflect a hostile nature.

When the Romans began to conquer the Iberian Peninsula, there were very different situations for them in Lusitania and Turdetania. The Turdetanians seemed to the Romans to be civilized because they were wealthy from trade, had urban centers for trade and their metal

industry, had a writing system, and generally did not meet Roman presence in Iberia with hostility. The Romans started to build in Turdetania early on in the process of conquering what would become Hispania, which suggests that the people of Turdetania were relatively cooperative with the Romans. Much later, Augustus gave to the senate control of Baetica (which most significantly included Turdetania) because of its stability, while he watched over Lusitania and the other provinces of Hispania with his legions because in these regions it was more difficult to maintain order. The Lusitanians first made themselves known to the Romans in battle, so they earned a warlike reputation from their first exchanges. They did not have the same features of civilization as their neighbors to the south like writing, trade or urban centers, which lead Romans to categorize them as less civilized. According to the Roman sources, Lusitanians were known for raiding other tribes in Iberia and for their military prowess. They certainly were less cooperative with the Romans than their southern neighbors, instead opting to resist conquest for almost a century longer than the Turdetanians. The Lusitanian chieftain Viriathus was an especially formidable counterpart to Roman generals. Viriathus was able to form larger federations than his predecessors, and enjoyed several victories against Roman legions. After his assassination however, the Lusitanians lost the momentum they enjoyed under his leadership and within a generation Decimus Junius Brutus Callaicus and the Romans had pacified the region. Now that there has been an explanation of how the Lusitanians and Turdetanians reacted to Roman rule, it is relevant to analyze the reasons behind these distinct levels of cooperation.

#### WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS? ANALYZING REASONS TO RESIST

Based on the evidence presented by Roman authors, this analysis poses that there were three factors contributing to the distinct reactions of the Lusitanians and the Turdetanians to

Roman hegemony: distinct cultural values, geography, and economic motivations. These three factors are by no means mutually exclusive; rather they are interrelated and, when examined together, can illuminate valuable history otherwise muddled in the overt ethnocentrism of ancient sources.

The Romans regarded characteristics inherent in Lusitanian and Turdetanian culture to have the most influence on the tribes' willingness to Romanize. As noted in the section above, the Turdetanians were seen as the most civilized of the barbarians. The Romans were familiar with their written laws, thriving industry, and international trade. The Turdetanians understood their own history to be cosmopolitan. The local elite participated in the Mediterranean stage: they imported objects that the Romans would have been familiar with, and adapted alphabets that were recognizable. The Turdetanians had many urban centers whose buildings displayed a combination of Carthaginian, Greek and native influence.<sup>23</sup> Since they already appreciated the amenities of what the Romans would call "civilization", Roman historians seem satisfied to reason that they would accept leadership from what they (ethnocentrically) consider to be the most sophisticated of all civilizations. Aside from the rare rebellion, the Turdetanians did not preoccupy themselves with military endeavors, instead the Romans assumed that they intelligently acknowledged the superiority of the Roman legions and bowed to the mightiest of the mighty.

The Lusitanians, on the other hand, earned a certain degree of respect for their military ventures but were generally puzzling to the Romans. Strabo, representing the Roman perspective, writes how the Lusitanians elected to live a life of "brigandage." They had smaller cities with less focus on industry. There is no mention of a written language or of currency.

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<sup>23</sup> Keay, *Roman Spain*, 19. When it came time to build their own settlements, archaeological evidence shows that the Romans used the Turdetanian cities as foundations for both Corduba and Italica.

Perhaps what would have been most shocking to the Romans was that their most celebrated leader did not come from a noble family but from an unknown background. There remains no evidence that the Lusitanians had ever been under foreign rule before, a fact that the Romans do not seem to take into consideration in the Lusitanian struggle for independence. In short, the Romans seem to have believed that the Lusitanians were too barbarous to understand the joys of civilization, and what is more, war appeared their favorite activity. Unlike the Lusitanians, the Turdetanians were separated from the rest of the Iberians in Roman opinion by their civil nature. Therefore, generic Iberian stereotypes were also probably ascribed to the Lusitanians; Iberians in general were considered to be inherently rebellious, with a streak of tribal individualism and rough customs.<sup>24</sup> The ethnocentric nature of Roman thought meant that Romans would have not had a problem with simply accepting inherent cultural differences between the Lusitanians and the Turdetanians as explanation enough for their different reactions for Roman rule. Conversely, my analysis poses that there are other important factors to consider: distinct geographic and economic situations also affected resistance efforts.

With regard to geographic situation, Turdetanians and the Lusitanians had significant differences. Perhaps the most significant difference in geography was the river so famous it had many names: the Tartessos, Baetis, Guadalquivir. This river was instrumental in creating settlements farther inland. Its water flowed with gold dust of high quality and enabled the nearby inhabitants to ship and travel all over the Mediterranean, as it emptied into the Atlantic very near the Straits of Gibraltar (Strabo, *Geography*, III.2). The Turdetanian ports were the westernmost borders of the known world thanks to their accessibility, and were famous far before the Romans arrived. The land was rich in soil and metals, helping the Turdetanians not only to survive but to thrive and become wealthy. As Strabo put it:

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<sup>24</sup> Arribas, *The Iberians*, 62.

Turdetania itself is marvelously blessed by nature; and while it produces all things, and likewise great quantities of them, these blessings are doubled by the facilities of exportation; for its surplus products are bartered off with ease... (Strabo, *Geography*, III.2.4).

The Lusitanians on the other hand also have fertile soil, land rich in metals, and rivers and estuaries that lead to their settlements. The distinction comes from vicinity to other lands, and mountainous regions that separate much of Lusitania from the rest of the continent. Sailing from any site of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast of Hispania, any merchant or colonizing power would have to pass through the Strait of Gibraltar, the mythical Pillars of Heracles just past the wide opening of the famed Tartessos or Baetis River.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the accessibility to Baetis and the vicinity of the Turdetanians to the passage from the Mediterranean made Turdetania a more convenient trading post. The Carthaginians agreed, building the city of Gades still closer to the straits than the mouth of the Baetis River. In contrast, Strabo describes how removed the Lusitanians were because of their geography:

The quality of intractability and wildness in these peoples has not resulted solely from their engaging in warfare, but also from their remoteness; for the trip to their country, whether by sea or by land, is long, and since they are difficult to communicate with, they have lost the instinct of sociability and humanity (Strabo, *Geography*, III.3.8).

Even from this passage it is possible to glean how Lusitania's geography does not encourage interaction with foreign nations in the way that the Turdetanians could easily exchange goods and foreigners could more easily visit them. Geography had a major effect on the culture of the Turdetanians and Lusitanians, so it is worth noting that it is difficult to definitively separate their geographical and cultural factors contributing to their resistance in this context.

Finally, the Turdetanians had a greater economic motivation to accommodate Roman domination than the Lusitanians. The ease with which Turdetanians could trade with Rome,

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<sup>25</sup> On the geography around the Pillars of Heracles: see Strabo, *Geography*, III.5.



Italy, and other Roman provinces promised to be highly profitable. Turdetanian leaders were accustomed to paying tribute from their Punic period, and now they were guaranteed protection by the best army around – they didn't have to hire mercenaries from surrounding tribes any more. Turdetanian acquiescence meant that Rome built cities and settlements first in Turdetania, giving its people first access to Roman commerce. The Lusitanians, on the other hand, were independent before Roman rule. They were not accustomed to paying tributes, and did not need the protection of the Roman military. Since they did not focus on commerce and there is no evidence that they had surpluses like the Turdetanians, the Lusitanians had no economic motivation to join the Romans. In fact, Strabo suggests that Lusitanians relied mainly on pillaging their neighbors for resources they could not appropriate themselves, a practice that Rome was undoubtedly going to end to protect its wealthy settlements. In summary, the Lusitanians had virtually no economic motivation to tolerate Roman rule.

Thus, the Turdetanians had more to gain with inclusion in the Roman Empire. They could make more money, trade easily on their waterways with their major new customer, and they had previously thrived under foreign rule. Lusitanians, on the other hand, had very little to gain from joining the Romans; they would have to pay tributes to a power that had committed a horrific massacre against their people, lose their independence, and all without the ease of trade that their neighbors to the south enjoyed. Through investigating the cultural history, geography, and economic systems of the Lusitanians and Turdetanians, one may see the implicit benefits for a Turdetanian Hispania. Conversely, the Lusitanians had very little to gain by joining the Romans and would lose their independence.

#### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Romans took the better part of two centuries to conquer all of the Iberian Peninsula. Each region presented different problems and challenges to the process, and although the Roman authors often did not distinguish between the Iberian tribes, it is evident that each tribe reacted differently to the prospect of Roman rule. The Turdetanians were economically motivated to cooperate with the Romans, and their convenient geographic location and their cosmopolitan historical background made the transition a relatively fluid one. The Lusitanians on the other hand had no such motivation, and they famously resisted Roman rule especially under their own epic hero Viriathus. The Lusitanians plundered the regions cooperative with the Romans and burned their crops. They enjoyed several major military successes against the Romans but also were massacred and had their cities broken up as consequence. Although the Romans were ultimately successful in subjugating Hispania, the legend of the rebellious Lusitanians lives on. Portuguese people still identify with their pre-Roman roots, calling themselves Lusitanians. Spaniards also celebrate the legend with the popular television series *Hispania: La Leyenda*, which tells the narrative of Viriathus. While Viriathus might roll in his grave as his on-screen persona rattles away in the language of the Romans, the continued celebration and fascination with pre-Roman identity arguably demonstrates that modern Iberians continue to have complex and varied responses to Roman hegemony.

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